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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

January 11, 2022

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Heidi Shyu
Under Secretary of Defense
for Research and Engineering
Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Austin and Under Secretary Shyu:

On January 10, 2022, Project Veritas published an August 2021 disclosure from U.S. Marine Corps Major Joseph Murphy concerning the origins of COVID-19.¹ According to the document, Major Murphy sent the disclosure to the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for investigation. It is my understanding that the disclosure was subsequently referred by the DoD OIG to the DoD's Research and Engineering office for further investigation.

According to the Major's disclosure, EcoHealth Alliance (EcoHealth), in conjunction with the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), submitted a proposal in March 2018 to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) regarding SARS-CoVs.² The proposal included a program, called DEFUSE, that sought to use a novel chimeric SARS-CoV spike protein to inoculate bats against SARS-CoVs.³ Although DARPA rejected the proposal, the disclosure alleges that EcoHealth ultimately carried out the DEFUSE proposal until April 2020 through the National Institutes of Health and National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases.⁴ The disclosure highlights several potential treatments, such as ivermectin, and specifically alleges that the EcoHealth DEFUSE proposal identified chloroquine phosphate (Hydroxychloriquine) and interferon as SARS-CoV inhibitors.⁵

¹ Military Documents About Gain of Function Research Contradict Fauci Testimony Under Oath, Project Veritas, Jan. 10, 2022, available at <https://www.projectveritas.com/news/military-documents-about-gain-of-function-contradict-fauci-testimony-under/>.

² Memorandum from Commandant of the Marine Corps Fellow, DARPA, to Inspector General, DoD, Aug. 13, 2021.

³ *Id.* at 2.

⁴ *Id.* at 1 and 2.

⁵ *Id.* at 3.

In order to better understand whether DoD is investigating these allegations, I ask that you provide the following by no later than January 25, 2022:

1. Did the office of Research and Engineering receive a copy of the enclosed disclosure from the DoD OIG? If so, please provide the date it received the complaint.
2. Has the office of Research and Engineering or another DoD component initiated an investigation of the allegations in the disclosure? If so, explain what investigative steps have been taken thus far. If not, please explain why not.
3. Has the office of Research and Engineering or another DoD component interviewed or spoken with the U.S. Marine Corps Major who drafted the disclosure? If so, when? If not, please explain why not.
4. Does DoD intend to create a written investigate report or any other document based on its investigation of allegations contained in the disclosure? If so, please provide a copy of those documents. If not, please explain why not.

I further request that your office provide a briefing on the findings of any investigation into the allegations contained in the disclosure. I also request to speak with U.S. Marine Corps Major Joseph Murphy to discuss his disclosure as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Sean O' Donnell
Acting Inspector General
Department of Defense